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CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

THE DREAM EXPERIENCE AND SPIRITS

171 787 At the heart of Maricopa culture was the dream experience. It was the one thing of which they constantly talked, the significant aspect of their life as they saw it. It is this more than any other single element that establishes the unity of their culture with that of the lower Colorado Yumans, and this holds equally for the other, originally Colorado peoples among them, Halchidhoma, Kohuana, and Halyikwamai, so far as one can now judge. At the same time, the Maricopa emphasis on experiences with particular spirits seems more like the generalized North American relation with guardian spirits than does the Mohave, with its myth framework in the phrasing of the dream.

787 554 828 Dream experience was at the bottom of all success in life, and as such their constant preoccupation. Learning was displaced by dreaming, and while it was recognized that an individual acquired skill by practice or imitated songs on hearing others, his activity or knowledge would be neither wholly successful nor significant unless he had dreamed. A single statement of Last Star's epitomizes their attitude: "Everyone who is prosperous or successful must have dreamed of something. It is not because he is a good worker that he is prosperous, but because he dreamed." All songs and song performances were revealed in dreams and their content was the dream experience; on the experience was based the conceiving of children, oratorical power, curing, bewitching, and shamanistic feats; clairvoyance and prowess in war, and the ability to lead in war or to serve as chief. In short, all special abilities were to be had by dreaming, and by dreaming alone.

774 787 Supernatural power came only in dreams and almost always involuntarily. Dream and spirit were called by a single word,

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cȧma'g. As Mrs. Redbird put it when asked for the word for spirit, "The only way to express 'spirit' is that it comes in dreams." The word gwĭstama'tc, "one who has power," i.e., one who has dreamed, seems based on the same stem. The core of the concept seems to be that what we are here calling spirit and dream were shadowy doubles of the same thing, namely, the experience with spirits in dreams. Asked to explain how the spirits entered into dreams, Kutox gave a halting explanation. "Here is my shadow. Now the Owl somewhere sends his spirit to meet others. We call that hucamai'ĭg. If I am asleep here, there is my shadow. If the spirits wanted to talk to me, they would take me out, that is, that part of me something like my shadow." The word hucamai'ĭg was then rendered "shadows meeting each other," but it is palpably based on cȧma'g, "dream," not on matkwĭca', "shadow" (of a man, animal, or object), "reflection" (as in water). At another time he said that "a dreamer's shadow (matkwĭca') has the experience with the spirit birds, not his soul (wipai')." This is unsatisfactory: it is at once too vague and too much objectified. The difficulty seems to be that the Maricopa were not interested in sharply crystallizing the concept. So far as I can see it sums up in this fashion: what we are here calling a spirit has no existence or at least never manifests itself except in dreams: the dream is not as we would say a phantasy based on a particular physiological state, but is a state in which some spiritual quality of the dreamer goes out to meet the spirit: in other words, it is the dream experience which is at once the dream and the spirit.

The same concept and stem appeared in the words lucky, cȧma'sȧxωtk (lit. "dream good"), and unlucky, cȧma'mŭk. These were explained as derived from the quality of one's dreams, which in turn depended on the time of night one dreamed. "To be lucky is to dream good. In the early evening one has bad dreams," and again "before dawn, when the spirit birds are fighting and eating each other, what with all their bloodstains, if one dreams of this he will get sick." Lucky dreams came in the middle of the night (see p. 248). On the other hand, some expressions for having power were based on another stem:

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CURING AND BEWITCHING

753 761 787 Illness and death were occasioned in four ways: by bad dreams, by the loss of the soul, by the intrusion of a disease object brought about by witchcraft, and by natural causes, old age and violence.[25] The most common cause was bad dreaming: such disorders as bowel complaints, diarrhoea, colds, pains in the chest and side, were attributed to it. Loss of the soul was also [774] common, but less so: this brought fainting spells. Soul loss was due solely to having dreamed of the dead: dead relatives came to persuade the dreamer to join them. Since these two concepts cover practically all cases, Last Star's declaration was justified that "it was always by dreaming that one got sick."

753 787 Dreaming wrong meant dreaming of certain things, mostly unspecified, contact with which in the dream brought it about that one acquired an illness. These illnesses were forever afloat in the world around. They were the blood, the sum of all dis- [773] eases, which gushed from the ground at the time of creation despite Cipas' efforts to stem it (p. 347). Since bad dreams which caused illness were also defined as those of the evening and dawn, when the spirit birds fought and bloodstains were everywhere (p. 248), it seems probable that this ancient heritage of blood-disease was meant. The acquisition of such illness was not in any way due to spirits, whether by the spirits' own activity or a shaman calling on his familiar to inflict disease. Spirits were con- 756 cerned only in that they had taught each shaman his cures.

The shaman's part in curing was that of one who had the power to draw out the particular illness, because a revelation had been made in his dreams. During the course of the cure he was not possessed, nor did he so much as call on his familiar for aid. [755] He blew, breathed, and sucked on the patient, and brushed with the hand, to allay the fever and pain and to draw the illness from him. But he did not suck out a disease object.

753 It is doubtful that this should be included with the classical

[762] [25] We may remark incidentally that our informants knew of no cases of suicide.

There was no belief comparable to that of the Pima that death was due to Sun and Night (Russell, *Pima Indians*, pp. 193, 251).

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cases of "illness by intrusion." The illness was thought of as due to the contamination of the dream. Illnesses were ever present, as we might say of pandemic diseases. They had no concrete form to be sucked out as an object. We can hardly speak here of contrasting theories of disease: soul loss *versus* intrusion. 753

The loss of the soul was suggested as the cause only when the symptoms were of one kind, fainting spells; when it was assumed the patient had dreamed of the dead. Such a person would be in apparent good health, when suddenly "he thinks he turns around and sees a dead relative coming, and there! he is dead," i.e., faints. 753 774 787 828

W——, a boy of fourteen, said that whenever he has fainting spells, his dead relatives appear to him; always two or three old men together. They talk to him, saying, "Come on; come along with us." His dead grandfather is the principal visitor. He also said that when a little child, he saw a ghost, dressed in white, seated on the spot where later his uncle was cremated. This ghost kept on nodding her head with its long hair.[26]

Illness and death due to manifest physical causes were regarded as of natural origin, even though the occasion of accident or wounding was held the result of non-physical influences. In answer to the direct question whether natural deaths did not occur, Kutox replied in the affirmative: in old age, but they were very rare (naturally, since few survive to old age). Of them they said "their heart pulls down," 'iwana'l$_y$g. 761 [753]

In all cases it was held that

before a person dies, while he is sick, they say the soul is already gone. During his sickness, his soul wanders in all the places the man has been on his hunting trips. After the soul gets tired, it makes up its mind that it is going to the land of the dead. Then, when the soul goes there, the man dies. [774]

It was not fully specified what things it was dangerous to dream about beyond the conflict of the spirit birds (p. 248), but several plants were mentioned. One called i'icama'c, "root wood," was a vine, which, growing beside a tree, made the tree twist. If one dreamed of this, or went near enough to smell it, he became entirely paralyzed and his body was sensitive to the touch. If this root be placed in the sun, it wiggled; so with the 753 787 [824]

[26] These "fainting spells" are apparently epileptic seizures. This is the lad who as a child could understand the language of dogs (p. 240).

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159 shaman, named ɬatoi', the best of his time. When he arrived, he announced that
755 he cured only at night. That night he cured inside the house; there was no fire.
648 He held his long eagle feathers in his left hand: these were four, bound in pairs to a short wooden handle. In his right hand was his gourd rattle. He sat with these and as he sang, everything was made clear to him. We thought it too dark for him to see, but for him it was broad daylight. I lay crosswise just in front of him. Only my wife was present with us.

As I had such a high fever, the shaman fanned me with his feathers to wave it away. When he had reduced the fever, he could see plainly who had bewitched
[754] me. He sang his songs as he fanned. I did not understand clearly, since he sang in Pima, but they were about Coyote. Coyote described the one who had bewitched me, told the shaman. When a spirit thus describes the right one, the patient gets well, but if it is wrong, he dies.

He would bend over me, but not touch my body. He took out what was in me, breathing hard as if swallowing something. Suddenly he jerked away and acted as though he was going to vomit. When he took it out of his mouth, it was a little grain of charcoal. Sometimes it is a little pebble, the size of a wheat grain: it depends on what the seizure is. If a fingernail were thrown into one, the sick man would have cramps [probably paralysis]. When he took this out, he switched his feathers back and forth to knock all the sickness away from me. Finally he told me who had bewitched me and why.

753 Curing for the loss of the soul was obtained as a generalized
774 description. The loss was due to dreaming of the dead; its symp-
787 tom fainting or dizziness. A person dreams he is in the land of the dead. If he eats anything given him there, he gets sick. He might dream repeatedly of this, join in the games there, and because it gave him pleasure, dream of it every night. Such a one would faint; then they always sent for a shaman who knew how to
755 treat it. The shaman's procedure was to search for indications
774 of the route the soul had taken toward the land of the dead, in order to pursue and capture it. He was one who had dreamed of Horned Owl. Significant of the extent of this type of illness and curing was the informant's statement that "this has often happened and they always tell it this way."

When the shaman neared the patient's home, he stopped from time to time trying to discover which way the soul had been taken, that is, whether by air or along the earth. He circled the locality counterclockwise, which "he says is circling the whole
[775] world." The dead were believed to have a path into this world from each of the cardinal directions. But they, the dead, rarely used the east and north roads, which were through the air. South and west roads were along the earth. When the shaman reached

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the spot where the dead had come and taken the soul, he had chills if they had gone by the south road. He continued circling until by the fourth circuit the patient's house was reached. Should he fail to find signs of the lost soul, he was certain that it must be halfway to the land of the dead. He then quickly rolled his cigarettes and puffed them into the air. By this means, he sent a flame after them. When they, the dead, saw the flame following, "just like blood coming over," they left the soul and ran off. But they always tried to put the patient's soul in front of them, and told it not to look back. If it did so and saw the flames following, the patient recovered consciousness. "Then they [humans] ask him and he tells what happened."

Curing shamans accompanied war parties to exercise their art. One named wantcâvaʀi' (Juan Chevereah)[33] dreamed how to cure those who were shot, "so they always took him along to war." He dreamed of Buzzard, Duck (a particular species?, ωķ'ωķ), and Gnat (? unyĭpâwa'pâwa'). When a warrior fell shot, he sang, moving about him with arms and legs stiff. He could cure arrow wounds only. Another Maricopa could cure not only these, but gun, spear, and knife wounds. "He also dreamed of these three spirits, but got more power."

Bewitching was a practice open to shamans, not to everyone. These were shamans, I was told, who had dreamed especially of Frog and Orion's Belt. But a conflicting statement suggests that bewitching was not confined to them. "All shamans could bewitch (matâðau'g). The spirit gives the shaman the choice of curing or bewitching, but the spirit tells him that he will not live long if he chooses the latter." Again, "a man who bewitched others would never try to cure. He would always try to bewitch." The truth seems to be that all shamans made only a partial choice.

The reason assigned for bewitching was jealousy. A handsome person or one who was prosperous was commonly the subject of witchcraft, thought Kutox, who was forever boasting how handsome he had been in his earlier days.

[33] Named as a Maricopa chief by the Mohave and the *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1858*, p. 207.

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826 Nail parings thrown away would make a noise like a kiss, so they did not like to throw them near where they slept.

SOULS AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

774 It is clear that concepts of soul were not involved in the dream experience. An individual possessed a plurality of souls: (1) wipai′, the soul proper, the vital principle; (2) 'ĭcĭnyoi′yĭm, "[something that] does not act good," the whirlwind soul, the ghost; (3) iwa′, the heart; (4) iwaănŏk, "small heart," the pulses. "At death the wipai′ goes to the land of the dead; the ghost stays about [in human guise] as the whirlwind; the heart becomes a horned owl, each pulse a screech owl. The heart is always the last part of the body to burn. It is called 'the horned owl,'" Kutox thinks, because it burns as a black lump. The horned owl was sometimes called kwĭpu′i iwa′c, "the dead people's heart." "The ghost is just the shadow of the dead person," according to Last Star. When illness was said to be occasioned by the loss of the soul, it was the wipai′ which was thought to leave the body. At death, the remaining souls left the body: the whirlwind soul perhaps at the instant of death; more certainly the heart and pulses fled the corpse during its cremation.

775 [825] [826]

184 775 The Maricopa believed that the land of the dead lay to the west, in the desert on the lower reaches of the Gila. They called it "the dead people's place" (puĭnyăva′, sing.; hupoi′ĭnyăva′, pl.). Where the Halchidhoma localized their after life while they were still on the Colorado, Kutox had never heard his people mention. As he knew them, living on the Gila with the Maricopa, they said that their own and the Maricopa dead went to the same place in the west. The point is of some interest. The Yumans of the lower Colorado assigned a southerly direction to it, hence this was probably also the original Halchidhoma localization. But the Maricopa have transposed the names of the cardinal points from the normal Yuman order, south becoming west, so that the direction downstream was correctly maintained, and with it, we may presume, the direction in which lay the land of the dead.